A GENUINE STATE OF A CASE in SURGERY:

BEING A

FULL REFUTATION

OF

Certain particular Facts related by Mr. *Bromfeild.*

By GEORGE AYLETT,

SURGEON at WINDSOR.

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A

GENUINE STATE

OF A

CASE in SURCERY:

BEING A

FULL REPUTATION

OF

LONDON:

TO THE

COURT of ASSISTANTS,

AND

COMPANY of SURGEONS

IN LONDON.

GENTLEMEN,

A Chirurgical diſpute happening between any two practitioners, cannot be referred to any tribunal with more propriety, than to your ſociety, diſtinguiſhed as it is, for candour, and capacity. But, this propriety becomes a point of duty, when the conteſt ariſes between two members of your own fraternity, alike intitled to your attention and regard. I might add, that the company of London Surgeons cannot be ſuppoſed indifferent to the iſſue of any diſpute, in which the honour of the profeſſion is intereſted.—In theſe ſentiments I have hazarded this addreſs, intreating a

patient hearing, to the plain account which I propoſe to give, and which, I flatter myſelf, will efface any unfavourable impreſſions you may have received, touching my character and conduct, as it has been traduced and miſrepreſented in a very malicious anticipation.

Mr. Bromfeild, whom you all know, has thought proper to make his public appearance in a pamphlet intitled, *A Narrative of certain particular Facts, which have been miſrepreſented, relative to the Conduct of Mr. Bromfield towards Mr. Aylett, a ſurgeon and apothecary of Windſor, during their attendance on Mr. Benwell at Eton, &c.*

This narrative, which he exhibits as a juſtification of his own character, is in fact, a virulent attack upon mine, as it implies a complicated charge againſt me, of inſolence, barbarity, and ingratitude. A heavy charge! with reſpect to which, I am confident that you, gentlemen, will ſuſpend your opinions until my anſwer is heard; knowing, as you do, how far prejudice, paſſion, and other incitements, may have encroached even upon that *modeſty*, *ſelf-denial*, and *veracity*, for which my accuſer is ſo juſtly celebrated.

But, I will no longer detain you, gentlemen, from the narrative, which I beg you will compare with that of the candid Mr. Bromfeild.

May

May the 29th, 1759, about two in the morning, Mr. Howard and myſelf were both ſent for at the ſame time to Mr. Benwell, on account of a bad accident which had happen'd to him; and we acted as Surgeons jointly concerned in the care of this accident. Mr. Bromfeild was call'd in (purſuant to a letter which I wrote to him) to be conſulted on this occaſion. In our meeting together, it was unanimouſly agreed that Mr. Benwell muſt loſe his leg: a ſecond meeting was appointed to be in two hours after, for the performance of the operation, if the patient ſhould give his conſent, which he had not yet done, but deſired farther time to conſider of it. On this interval, it was ſettled between Mr. Howard and Mr. Bromfeild, at the houſe of the former, that Mr. Howard ſhould decline the operation, and Mr. Bromfeild perform it in his ſtead.

In conſequence of this agreement, when I came at the appointed time to the patient, with my own inſtruments and apparatus, which I had ordered to be got ready, upon a preſumption that Mr. Howard might decline the operation, as he had done on a former occaſion, I found, to my great ſurpriſe, Mr. Bromfeild prepared for operating. Conſidering myſelf as one of the two ſurgeons firſt ſent for and employ'd, and regarding Mr. Bromfeild only as conſulting ſurgeon,

to determine as is uſual in ſuch caſes, whether the operation was adviſeable or not; I repreſented to him, that if Mr. Howard had declined performing the operation, it of courſe devolved to me, who was originally concerned in the caſe, in conjunction with Mr. Howard. After ſome altercation upon this point (but not in the preſence of the patient, as has been falſely repreſented) Mr. Bromfeild declared, that the patient and his friends had likewiſe joined in the ſame requeſt with Mr. Howard; tho' this was not ſaid till Mr. Bromfeild had exhauſted all the arguments he could bring in ſupport of his conduct, for attempting to operate inſtead of Mr. Howard, without my being conſulted, or giving my conſent. This however being an argument, which when eſtabliſh'd, cou'd not be reaſonably oppoſed by me, I only wanted to be aſſured of the certainty of the requeſt; and therefore aſk'd him if he had received it from the patient's own mouth? He replied in the negative, but ſaid, a gentleman had juſt told him ſo. I then replied, that in juſtice to thoſe who call'd him in, for his opinion only, it was incumbent on him to acquaint the patient and his friends with the cuſtomary proceedings on ſuch occaſions; and as he had not ſeen the patient ſince the operation had been reſolved on, I inſiſted to know the patient's directions in this reſpect,

ſpect. Mr. Bromfield inſtantly acquieſced in this propoſal; and, after pulling off his apron and ſleeves, went up to Mr. Benwell for that purpoſe: he ſoon return'd, and told me, it was Mr. Benwell's deſire that he ſhould perform the operation. Not chuſing, after the behaviour I had met with from Mr. Bromfeild ſo recently, to put an implicit confidence in what he ſaid, I told him, that I would alſo ſee Mr. Benwell, who had mention'd no ſuch circumſtance to me, when I was with him juſt before. I accordingly went up to Mr. Benwell, and in the propereſt terms I could uſe, deſired to know, as Mr. Howard had declined the operation, whether he had any objection to my doing it? Mr. Benwell replied, that Mr. Bromfeild had juſt been with him on the ſame ſcore; and that he had told him he intended he ſhould perform it. On this declaration I replied, I ſhould then take my leave: but before I could quit the apartment, Mr. Poppleton, the patient's friend, and who ſat by him, addreſs'd himſelf to Mr. Benwell in this manner, "Theſe gentlemen are both "able men; we don't underſtand their forms "of buſineſs, 'tis better to leave this affair to "be ſettled by themſelves." Mr. Benwell making no objection to this reaſonable propoſal of his friend, but acquieſcing in the expedient, on Mr. Poppleton's repeating it to me, I immediately went down ſtairs, and related

related to Mr. Bromfeild this determination. I then told him likewiſe, that I had an undoubted right to inſiſt on performing the whole operation; but as matters were circumſtanced, I would take off the limb, and he ſhould take up the blood veſſels: adding, but not with a deſign to pay him any real compliment, as he would inſinuate, that *under his auſpices*, I ſurely could not fail to perform the operation properly: and this was the whole of the agreement betweer us, notwithſtanding Mr. Bromfeild's parade upon this article. Mr. Bromfeild readily agreed to this propoſal; and we were preparing to go up to the patient, when Mr. Poppleton came in to us from Mr. Benwell, deſiring to *know if we had ſettled the point of operating*, as Mr. Benwell was deſirous to have it over. On telling him it was ſettled, and we were coming up, he reported it to Mr. Benwell's friends, many of whom were aſſembled together; and who, had they not thought this to have been Mr. Benwell's final determination, would moſt undoubtedly have interfered, and not have ſuffered me to cut off their friend's leg againſt his inclination and will. This Mr. Poppleton has declared would particularly have been the caſe with him, who would not have permitted me to operate at all, unleſs he had been aſſured it was Mr. Benwell's inclination to leave it to our deciſion.

ciſion. This gentleman, it muſt be obſerved, was preſent at all the conferences previous to the operation, brought the meſſage from Mr. Benwell to us, to know if the points were ſettled, ſaw me prepared to operate, was preſent during the whole time, and aſſiſted me in the operation, by ſupporting the patient while I took off his leg: yet it is very remarkable, that this gentleman, tho' an evidence of ſo much importance in the diſpute, is never mentioned by Mr. Bromfeild in his whole narrative. To proceed: The operation was immediately afterwards performed, without any other difficulty; but Mr. Bromfeild, who now returned to town, thought proper to leave his 'prentice to attend the patient during his abſence, though I remonſtrated to the contrary.

The day of the operation, and the two ſucceeding days, the medicines given to the patient were directed and adminiſtered without any regard to my opinion or concurrence; tho' as I had taken off the limb, I was ſurely very particularly concerned in the event. This behaviour, added to Mr. Bromfeild's conduct before the operation, partly determined me not to attend the patient any longer. At the particular requeſt, however, of Mr. Benwell and his friends, that I would be preſent at the firſt opening of the ſtump, I promiſed to meet Mr. Bromfeild and Mr. Howard again. With this deſign I waited

near

near two hours after the appointed time, tho' to no purpoſe, Mr. Bromfeild not being then come: the appointment was at noon, and I return'd about two to my own houſe, which is a ſmall diſtance from the patient's. Before I went away I left word at Mr. Benwells, that I ſhould keep myſelf in readineſs to attend Mr. Bromfeild, but wiſh'd particularly to know what time would be moſt agreeable to him to open the ſtump; for the patient, while I was in waiting, having invited me to dine at his houſe with Mr. Bromfeild, which I declined, and having mentioned that the dinner was ordered at two o'clock, I was not only uncertain what time Mr. Bromfeild would come, but likewiſe when he did come, whether he would dine firſt before he opened the ſtump, as I knew then of no particular reaſon to prevent it. I left this meſſage therefore at Mr. Benwell's, that I might neither hurry Mr. Bromfeild, upon a ſuppoſition that I kept him waiting; nor that, when I went myſelf I ſhould be obliged to ſtay there longer than was neceſſary. About half an hour after two, a meſſenger came to me, to inform me of Mr. Bromfeild's arrival; but as the meſſenger mention'd no time for dreſſing the ſtump, I deſired him to go back for an anſwer to that particular; and I would be punctual to the time which ſhould be appointed. Upon a return of the meſſenger, to inform me that Mr. Bromfeild intended to remove

remove the dreſſings before dinner, I went inſtantly to Mr. Benwell's; but before I could reach the houſe, though it could not be more than ten minutes from the laſt meſſage, the freſh applications were made to the ſtump; and the buſineſs, to which I had been ſo formally invited, and for which I had ſo long waited, was concluded without me. The whole time of this tranſaction could not exceed half an hour, as Mr. Penford before mentioned, who received the meſſage, is, amongſt other things, ready to teſtify. I cannot help being very particular in this article, as injurious and very unjuſt reflections have been thrown out, as if I had deſignedly, or at leaſt inattentively, let a man ſuffer pain unneceſſarily. The patient, however, before I left the room, and in preſence of Mr. Bromfeild, acknowledged himſelf very much obliged to me, thanked me for my care, but told me, as Mr. Howard was the ſurgeon he had moſt commonly employed, it would be his buſineſs to dreſs the ſtump hereafter. I look'd on this declaration as a formal diſmiſſion, and wiſhing him ſucceſs, and declaring my readineſs to aſſiſt upon any real emergency, took my leave. Two days after I received ſeveral preſſing invitations from Mr. Bromfeild, to be preſent at the ſecond dreſſing; but I of courſe declined any ſuch attendance, after what

the patient had declared to me, and as I had very little deſire of meeting Mr. Bromfeild again upon any occaſion I could properly avoid.

Before I left the patient's houſe, I had a private converſation with Mr. Bromfeild, in which I told him, with great freedom, the opinion I had of his management. I explained to him my thoughts of his ungentleman-like treatment, in firſt attempting to operate on a patient, to whom he had been called in for his judgment only, and without at all conſulting me upon the occaſion.—on his leaving his apprentice behind him, contrary to my remonſtrance;—his giving and directing medicines without my conſent and approbation—and finally, his dreſſing the ſtump without me, though he knew I had been in waiting ſeveral hours by appointment for his coming. I concluded with telling him, that I looked on ſuch treatment as a groſs affront, and an injury; but that as I ſhould conſult my chirurgical friends on the occaſion, I wiſh'd he would do the ſame.——. That I ſhould be determined by their judgments: if I had been in any reſpect to blame, I would aſk his pardon; but if, on the contrary he had, I ſhould inſiſt on the ſame acknowledgment from him.

As I knew he was to dreſs the patient again on the Sunday following, (for poor Mr.

Mr. Howard, all this time, was not permitted any other honour than to aſſiſt Mr. Bromfeild's apprentice in preparing the dreſſings) I ſent at noon Mr. Penford, my aſſiſtant, to Mr. Bromfeild, to let him know, that I inſiſted on ſeeing him before he left Eton; otherwiſe I muſt neceſſarily come up to town on purpoſe; and that I would meet him wherever he would appoint, except at Mr. Benwell's, Howard's, or my own houſe. He ſent me word back, that he expected and hoped to ſee me at Mr. Benwell's: that if it was not convenient for me to come down before dinner, (for Mr. Penford had informed him that I was then attending a patient at Sir Edward Walpole's, where indeed I was, but not at dinner there, as Mr. Bromfeild has aſſerted, Sir Edward being then at a diſtant part of the country) he would wait for me till four o'clock. I returned him for anſwer, that I could not poſſibly come to Mr. Benwell's, 'till I had ſome further converſation with him, and deſired he would appoint the place of meeting, which he did at the Chriſtopher; the hour five o' clock. I ſent to inform him, that I waited there by his appointment, but he came not till between ſix and ſeven. I there explained my mind to him very fully, and told him that I expected an acknowledgment of the affront he had offered me, and the injury he had done me, and that the

acknowledgment ſhould be public before our common friends. When I deſired an immediate anſwer to this remonſtrance, he ſaid he ſhould viſit his patient, Mr. Benwell, again the next day; and deſired he might conſider of it till then, when I ſhould certainly hear from him. Inſtead of ſeeing him the next day, which I expected, as he came down to Eton, and ſtaid there all night, he ſent me a long evaſive letter, wherein, however, among other things, he expreſsly ſays, that *I determined what part he ſhould take in the operation*; —— that *he thought me as capable as himſelf, or any other of the profeſſion*; —— that *I took off the limb, and that he, at my requeſt, ſecured the blood-veſſels*; —— that *Mr. Benwell had not the leaſt thought of diſmiſſing me*; — that *he begg'd I would be jointly concerned with Mr. Howard, as he certainly ſhould not dreſs the ſtump any more himſelf.*

As this letter, after what had paſſed, was not anſwerable to what I expected and required, I in a ſhort anſwer acquainted him, that I inſiſted upon having ſome farther converſation with him, in order to ſettle what I thought could not be paſſed over without further notice. To which he ſent me the following reply the next morning:

Eton,

" *Eton, Tueſday Morning.*

" SIR,

" I Was in hopes what I related laſt night " in my letter, would have been ſatis- " factory to you, in reſpect to my conduct " at Mr. Benwell's: nevertheleſs, if you " think there ſtill remains any points, in " which I have acted improperly towards " you, as my intention was not in any ſhape " to give you offence, I ſhall not have any " objection to acknowledge it in the pre- " ſence of any friends of yours and mine; " and if err'd, though involuntarily, to aſk " your pardon, as nothing will give me " greater pleaſure, than to be on the ſame " terms I have always been with Mr. " Aylett.

" *I am, SIR,*

" *Your Humble Servant,*

" W. BROMFEILD."

The terms of this letter implying a doubt with reſpect to the reaſonableneſs of my demand, and Mr. Bromfeild, though deſired, yet avoiding to ſee me, while he was at Eton, I wrote once more, in order to

to prevent any future trouble in explanations, meſſages, letters, &c.

" *Windſor, June* 7

" SIR,

" INSTEAD of an anſwer to your laſt " by Mr. Poppleton, was I not detained " here by very particular buſineſs, with a " lady of conſequence, I had moſt certainly " ſeen you in town before now; ſince you " have laid me under a neceſſity of coming " *there*, by your refuſing to ſee me *here*: " but the very moment I am releaſed, you " may depend on it, I won't diſappoint " you. To cut the matter ſhort, ſo *infa-* " *mous* has been your treatment, that I " muſt and do inſiſt on your acknowledg- " ing in writing, or before proper wit- " neſſes, that your conduct to me at Mr. " Benwell's, in regard to ſome eſſential " points in buſineſs, has been extremely " irregular at leaſt, I mean as to the fol- " lowing [redacted]; firſt, in your acceptance, " and attempt to put in practice Mr. " Howard's deputation to you, to operate " for him, without aſking my conſent. " Secondly, your giving, and directing me- " dicines without my concurrence or know- " ledge. Thirdly, your removing the firſt " dreſſing without my being preſent.—— " Theſe, Sir, are the points which I inſiſt

" on

" on your acknowledging to have *err'd in*,
" previous to your aſking me pardon, and
" confeſſing you thereby intended me nei-
" ther injury or affront. I muſt beg to
" aſſure you, that nothing leſs will ſatisfy
" me.

" *I am*

" *Your humble ſervant*,

" GEO. AYLETT."

To this letter I received the following anſwer.

Conduit ſtreet, June the 9th, 1759.

" SIR,

" ON reconſidering the points which you
" had taken amiſs in my conduct at Mr.
" Benwell's, I was ſenſible, according to
" the punctilios of politeneſs in our pro-
" feſſion, I had taken a liberty which I
" could not juſtify on ſo ſlight a friendſhip
" as I find ſubſiſted between us; and as it
" was an error, without any deſign to af-
" front you, or injure you in any ſhape, I
" intended to acknowledge it in the pre-
" ſence of any friends of yours and mine,
" and at the ſame to have asked your par-
" don. This was the intention of what I
" wrote on Tueſday morning, and I in-

" cloſed

" cloſed it to Mr. Poppleton, and begg'd the " favour of him to ſee you, and to get you " to fix any time that was moſt convenient " to you, and I would meet you for the a- " bove purpoſe; and am ready to wait on " you to-morrow afternoon, at any hour " you will appoint, to do the ſame,

" *I am, SIR,*

" *Your humble ſervant,*

" W. BROMFEILD.

" P. S. I am to be at Mr. Benwell's by " dinner."

In Mr. Bromfeild's printed copy of this letter, though it is not ſo in the real one, he has inſerted after the word *politeneſs*, the following expreſſion, *which in ſtrictneſs might be inſiſted on by gentlemen of the profeſſion*; likewiſe other words not mentioned in the original.

In conſequence of this letter, an appointment was made for meeting, and Mr. Bromfeild performed his promiſe there, in the preſence of his and my friends. After this ceremony was paſſed, the following paper was read by Mr. Bromfeild, and all the gentlemen preſent, and each ſeparate article being approved by Mr. Bromfeild, he then ſigned it.

A Copy

A Copy of the Paper ſigned by Mr. Bromfeild.

" I Acknowledge that my conduct to-
" wards Mr. Aylett, relative to ſome
" eſſential forms of buſineſs, was irregular;
" and that I did not thereby intend him
" the leaſt injury, or affront.

" That I had no pretenſions to take off
" Mr. Benwell's leg, on the ſole deputa-
" tion of Mr. Howard, without Mr. Ay-
" let's concurrence; nor ought any medi-
" cines to have been given, without his
" approbation.

" That I ought not to have dreſſed the
" ſtump the firſt time, without Mr. Ay-
" lett being preſent, *as I find he kept him-*
" *ſelf in waiting by appointment, for that*
" *purpoſe; for all which I aſk his pardon.*

Eton, June 10, 1759. " W. BROMFEILD."

All that part of the laſt article, which is diſtinguiſhed by Italics, Mr. Bromfeild has omitted in the copy given in his own narrative. Why he choſe to make this omiſſion, is not neceſſary for me to explain. It may be proper, however, to obſerve here, the reaſons which he gives for his ſigning the acknowledgment at all. His reaſons are, firſt, his great *friendſhip* for me *at that*

time;

time; ſecondly, *being prompted to it by good-nature extended to folly*; thirdly, *becauſe he had a perſon in a poſt-chaiſe waiting for him at the door*. As to the firſt of theſe, it is ſomewhat extraordinary he ſhould poſſeſs ſuch a large ſhare of *friendſhip* for me juſt *at that time*, as he ſeems, by his general behaviour, to have felt no ſuch biaſs before; and it is more extraordinary, when it is conſidered in what manner we had converſed for ſome time; and that I had, but two or three days before, in my laſt letter to him, been obliged to declare his conduct to be *infamous*, and inſiſted upon his *asking my pardon publicly*. The ſecond reaſon, therefore, muſt be the real one, namely, his *exceſs of good-nature extended to folly*; though he ſeems to lay ſome ſtreſs upon the *poſt-chaiſe being at the door*, as he has before made uſe, in his narrative, of the ſame argument for not ſtaying with me, to diſcuſs and ſettle this affair at the Chriſtopher. Some, I know, have endeavoured to account for his ſigning this paper, by ſaying he was *intimidated* into doing it; but where ſo many people were met together, as there were upon that occaſion, any perſonal apprehenſion could not poſſibly operate ſo ſtrongly, as to make him ſign, or ſay any thing that he thought untrue, or improper. No, if he had been conſcious of having acted right, certainly he would not have ſuffered articles of impeachment

to

to be publickly read to him, acknowledged ſeparately the propriety of them, ſubmitted to aſk pardon *viva voce*, and then have perpetuated this tranſaction upon paper, by ſigning his name to his own condemnation.

It may be proper likewiſe to take notice here of what he ſays about the paper itſelf, which he ſigned ---- that it ſeemed *torn from a letter, and ſerving only as a memorandum of the points in diſpute.* But I muſt remind Mr. Bromfeild, that, however he might diſlike the ſight of the paper, which is really of a very decent ſize and form, as may be ſeen at the publiſher's, it was certainly carried to him for his inſpection, and read by him many hours before the meeting was held, at which he ſigned it, as Mr. Penford, my aſſiſtant, and who carried this paper to Mr. Bromfeild, is ready to teſtify; as he is to contradict many articles in his narrative. The real intent and meaning of having this acknowledgment ſigned at all, was to ſave a great deal of future trouble. I found, by experience, that Mr. Bromfeild would be conſtantly evading what he had ſaid; and I was willing to ſave my friends the trouble of being appealed to upon every freſh occaſion. The event appears now to have ſufficiently juſtified this caution, for Mr. Bromfeild has not only attempted to attribute his ſigning the

paper to motives which certainly never exiſted, but has even ventured, in his own printed copy of the articles, to leave out a very eſſential part of them; a ſtriking inſtance of his effrontery, and a plain proof, what degree of reliance may be had on the other part of his narrative.

At the ſame time, and before the ſame witneſſes that this paper was ſigned, Mr. Bromfeild, declared that the amputation was well performed, and that the ſtump was in good condition; a queſtion that was put to him by me, to be publickly anſwered, as ſome malicious reports had been, and indeed ſometimes are ſtill inſinuated to the contrary, particularly concerning the preſervation of the ſkin; in regard to which Mr. Bromfeild confeſſed immediately after the operation, before Mr. Penford, who will atteſt the ſame, that *there was ſufficient for any one to have left.* He profeſſed, likewiſe great uneaſineſs that he had been ſo principal a cauſe of my diſcontinuing attendance on Mr. Benwell; declared it was incumbent on him to endeavour that I ſhould attend the patient again; and inſiſted I would give him leave to wait on Mr. Benwell and his friends for that purpoſe. I deſired the gentlemen preſent would take notice that this was no requeſt of mine; that I would attend on no other conditions, but that of dreſſing a ſtump of my own form-

ing;

ing; and that he ſhould take his 'prentice up to town with him.

I asked him, however, if Mr. Benwell agreed to his propoſal, how he would reconcile this point to his friend Howard? To which he replied, *he could eaſily manage him, if he obtained Mr. Benwell's conſent.* The ſucceſs of this negociation terminated in the manner which both my friends and myſelf expected.

Thus, gentlemen, have I recounted the particulars of this ſtory, by which I imagine you will ſee, that the original ſource of this diſpute between Mr Bromfeild and me was owing to his deſign of ſnatching the patient out of my hands: that in the execution of this deſign, he tampered with the paſſive diſpoſition of the other ſurgeon concerned, and endeavoured to overawe me into a tame acquieſcence, or provoke me by ill uſage to retire in diſguſt. It appears, I hope, that I was guilty of no barbarity to the patient: that I arrogated no prerogative to which I was not intitled; but that in this whole tranſaction I acted the part of a man who had ſenſe enough to feel, and ſpirit enough to reſent an injury. But there is no neceſſity for dwelling longer on a point which has been proved by the evidence of Mr. Bromfeild himſelf, who has given it under his hand, that he has done me wrong; though he now endeavours to invalidate the

force of his own teſtimony, and turns apoſtate to his own confeſſions: but it ſeems theſe conceſſions were made from motives of friendſhip and compaſſion. He had a mind to countenance a country practitioner, for whom, according to his account, he had profeſſed a friendſhip, with whom he had maintained a long courſe of intimacy, and upon whom he had conferred repeated obligations. What his intimacy and theſe favours were, ſhall be explained by and by.

In the mean time I muſt beg leave to ſay thus much in my own behalf: that my education has been at leaſt as liberal as that of Mr. Bromfeild: that I have practiſed very near as long, and I hope as reputably as he has exerciſed the profeſſion: that my good name hath been hitherto unſoiled: and that my character will bear enquiry. I pretend not indeed to any uncommon merit. I profeſs not to have any *Noſtrums*, nor ever thought of making a *ligature upon the Aorta, for the cure of an aneuriſm.* I have not, I muſt own, had occaſion to uſe the knife quite ſo often as it muſt neceſſarily be handled by an hoſpital ſurgeon; but ſurely, gentlemen, a man of tolerable education, and a pretty good ſhare of practice for twenty years; who has been duly examined, and admitted into your reſpectable ſociety, cannot be at a loſs in performing a common amputation. Mr. Bromfield indeed

deed has acquitted me of any deficiency in this particular, by declaring before ſeveral gentlemen of credit, at the Chriſtopher at Eton, a fortnight after the limb was taken off, that the operation had been well performed, and the ſtump was then in good condition. Indeed my juſtification in this reſpect is in a great degree connected with his own, ſince if I had failed in my part, he muſt in honour to himſelf, and duty to the patient, have taken immediate meaſures for rectifying what was amiſs. He is in reality therefore very little obliged to his partizans or emiſſaries for inſinuating, that the operation was not properly performed; as I have other teſtimonies well authenticated, to diſprove ſo malicious a ſuggeſtion. I muſt now beg leave, however trifling it may ſeem, gentlemen, to lay before you the nature of the intimacy that ſubſiſted between Mr. Bromfield and me; and to the beſt of my recollection I ſhall mention the favours which I have ever received at his hands: favours which are ſo loudly trumpeted, as a charge againſt my gratitude and moral ſenſibility. If then I have ever received any favours from Mr Bromfield, they are the following: About nine years ago, buſineſs firſt threw him in my way, in my own neighbourhood, and I aſked him to be preſent while I trapaned a poor man's child, and he attended accordingly. Upon this

this occaſion we dined together; a circumſtance which never happened before, or ſince. He had a ſon at Eton ſchool ſeveral years, to whom I ſhewed civilities; and whom I often attended upon ſlight indiſpoſitions. He told me at this time, that he had recommended me in the different branches of ſurgery and pharmacy to the care of two young gentlemen at the ſame ſchool; and indeed he half performed his promiſe, by recommending me as ſurgeon only. He likewiſe, at my deſire, admitted a butcher's lad at St. George's hoſpital, as an out-patient, where he was dreſſed for ſome time; but it being thought convenient that he ſhould attend at Mr. Bromfeild's own houſe, he was dreſſed there ſome time longer, when he died. This obligation, however, muſt be reckoned at no great value, as Mr. Bromfeild received a pecuniary gratuity for his trouble.

Theſe are all the favours and acts of friendſhip I can recollect to have received from Mr. Bromfeild: but allowing that he really had actually ſerved me on ſome occaſions eſſentially, ought he, becauſe he had befriended me in one place, to injure me in another? was it the part of a friend, or that of a man of common candour, to obtain a clandeſtine delegation, which encroached on my privilege, reputation, and intereſt? To prepare himſelf for the operation

tion which I had a right to perform, without deigning me the leaſt previous apology, or communication of his deſign: to preſcribe medicines to the patient without my privity or conſent: to leave his apprentice, in order to take charge of a ſtump which I had formed, as if the perſon who amputated the limb, and reſided on the ſpot, was not capable of managing the dreſſings; or had not an undoubted right to ſuperintend the conſequences of his own operation: finally, to remove the dreſſings at his firſt viſit after the amputation, without vouchſafing to wait a few minutes for my arrival, though he knew I had been in waiting for him near two hours, after the time of his appointment.

Having thus fairly ſtated, and I hope balanced the account of obligation between Mr. Bromfeild and myſelf, I might enter into a diſcuſſion of almoſt every page of his narrative, as there are few in which there is not ſome circumſtance related unfairly, words altered in one place, added in another, and intirely omitted in a third; but I ſhall no longer detain you, gentlemen, in reconſidering particulars, as the general plan and ſcope of Mr. Bromfeild's conduct has, I hope, been diſplayed to your full conviction. It is, however, incumbent to take notice of Mr. Benwell's very extraordinary letter, with which Mr.

Bromfeild cloſes his extraordinary narrative. In this letter, to the acrimony of which Mr. Benwell ſeems to have been partly inſtigated by reading over the narrative, though he was not, he ſays, *totally unacquainted with my behaviour before*; it is ſaid, that I behaved with inhumanity to him in his greateſt diſtreſs; that I withdrew myſelf without having been diſmiſſed from attending him; that I acted ungratefully to Mr. Bromfeild; that I impoſed a falſity on Mr. Bromfeild, by ſaying Mr. Benwell had conſented to my doing any part of the operation; that I had taken off his leg without his knowledge; and that *upon reading over the narrative to his whole family, they declared every circumſtance related in it was fact, and were ready to give their oaths to the truth, if required.*

To remove the [illegible]ion of *inhumanity*, I ſhall refer to the preceding account, which, as well as my own conviction, will, I hope, acquit me of ſo deteſtable a charge. It may too, I hope, be no unavailing evidence, to appeal to my general character, to ſhew the improbability of my being guilty of ſuch a crime; and there certainly is great need of an explanation, to account how this charge brought againſt me, correſponds with Mr. Benwell's *thanking me for my care, and for all favours*, when he diſmiſſed me; or why, if he thought ſo badly of me, he ſhould afterwards

wards *ſend repeated meſſages to me*, to tell me, *he never intended to diſmiſs me, and deſired to ſee me again*, as he appears to have done.

The ſame difficulty occurs in accounting for what is intimated in Mr. Benwell's letter, and expreſly ſaid in the Narrative, that the charge of inhumanity is to be imputed to me from the *firſt of my attendance*: whereas Mr. Benwell, ſince his going abroad, has publicly declared that I behaved with great tenderneſs upon the accident; and indeed if Mr. Benwell had choſe to forget this part of my behaviour, his friends that were about him at that melancholy time, can very well teſtify the anxious attention I ſhewed upon the occaſion; not only in reſpect to the immediate relief of the accident, as much as the caſe would then admit; but in diſpatching with the utmoſt vigilance to London a meſſenger for the other aſſiſtance agreed upon, and in doing every thing in the mean time that could poſſibly contribute to the quieting his mind.

That I withdrew myſelf afterwards from attending Mr. Benwell is certainly true, but not before he had declared to me that Mr. Howard ſhould dreſs the ſtump for the future: a declaration that I looked on as a formal and harſh diſmiſſion, as it certainly excluded me from the right of dreſſing a

ſtump of my own making, and ſeemed calculated to diſgrace me with my neighbours. I appeal to yourſelves, gentlemen, whether any one of you ſo circumſtanced would not have thought himſelf ill treated, and have retired from ſuch attendance? and whether you would not have owned that I had debaſed and injured my own character, and the credit of the profeſſion, had I tamely acquieſced to ſuch a propoſal, and condeſcended to have acted the part of a deputy to Mr. Bromfeild's apprentice, and his aſſiſtant Mr. Howard, in a caſe where it was my undoubted privilege to appear as principal and director?

The charge of ingratitude to Mr. Bromfeild, either on this or any other occaſion, has, I am perſuaded, been ſufficiently refuted; and therefore I ſhall proceed to the next act of deliquency advanced againſt me in Mr. Benwell's letter, namely, that I impoſed a falſity on Mr. Bromfeild, in ſaying that Mr. Benwell had conſented to my doing any part of the operation. The tranſaction upon which this accuſation is founded, I have related in my narrative. Mr. Poppleton, the patient's friend, propoſed to Mr. Benwell, that Mr. Bromfeild and I ſhould ſettle between ourſelves the manner of performing the operation. Mr. Benwell appeared to agree to this. I went down ſtairs, and communicated this expe-

dient

dient to Mr. Bromfeild, and in conſequence thereof, the affair was inſtantly ſettled; when Mr. Poppleton came down with a meſſage from Mr. Benwell, to know if we had done ſo. For the truth of theſe facts, I do not deſire, gentlemen, that you ſhould depend upon my bare aſſertion. I appeal to Mr. Poppleton, a gentleman of ſtrict honour and veracity, and the patient's friend, who acted a principal part in this ſcene, and who ſurely cannot be ſuppoſed partial to me in his evidence on this occaſion. If he then ſhall confirm the truth of what I have declared, as I am confident he will, you may perceive with what juſtice and charity Mr. Benwell has, in the moſt harſh terms accuſed me of faſhood and impoſition.

The ſame Mr. Benwell taxes me with having cut off his limb, without his knowledge.—It muſt ſeem very extraordinary, after what had paſt, that Mr. Benwell ſhould not have known that I had ſome ſhare in the operation; and it has an appearance as if Mr. Bromfeild, Mr. Howard, and the patient's friends had all joined in a conſpiracy to deceive him; otherwiſe it muſt be ſuppoſed they would never have permitted me to perform an operation which they thought ſo dangerouſly diſagreeable to the patient. I will not however pretend to aſſert poſitively, that Mr. Benwell did know I took off his leg, as he abſolutely denies it;

it; 'twas very probable he might not know the exact and particular ſhare I had in the operation, as it is uſual on ſuch occaſions for the patient's eyes to be covered. I can only ſay, for my own part, that I certainly ſhould not have been brute enough to have undertaken the operation at all, if I had not regarded Mr. Benwell's acquieſcing to Mr. Poppleton's propoſal, for our ſettling the manner of operating between us, as an undoubted authority for the part I took: and I muſt farther add, that as I employed no arts, and took no pains to conceal what I was about, ſo neither was I at all ſenſible, that Mr. Benwell was at that time ignorant of what I did.

However unaccountable this part of the hiſtory may ſeem, there is one circumſtance not leſs extraordinary, when it is duly conſidered; namely, that my performing any part of the operation ſhould be kept a ſecret from Mr. Benwell near three weeks after it was done: during which time Mr. Benwell received the viſits and congratulations of his friends; and Mr. Bromfeild had publickly declared at the Chriſtopher, that the operation was well performed, and the ſtump in good condition: but why he was kept quite ignorant that we had ſettled to do the operation between us, I muſt leave to the explanation of Mr. Bromfeild, who ſeems all along to have had a ſecret

purpoſe

purpoſe to anſwer, in making himſelf regarded as the only perſon of any conſequence in this affair. All that appears from his narrative, or letter, is, that Mr. Benwell did not look upon what paſſed between him, Mr. Poppleton, and myſelf, in the ſame light, that Mr. Poppleton and I did; and that he was ignorant of the agreement between Mr. Bromfeild and me; and likewiſe of the proceeding in conſequence of this agreement.

Did Mr. Bromfeild fear, that if Mr. Benwell had been told, during this favourable time, that I had cut off his leg, he would have been reconciled to me, and have deſired me to take the future care of his ſtump? and would not ſuch a diſcovery, and ſuch a reconcilement, not only have leſſened Mr. Bromfeild's merit, in regard to the operation; but likewiſe have leſſened his future viſits, as well as intirely have removed the tedious attendance for ſo many months of his apprentice?—At all events it muſt be allowed, that I had no concern in this particular: but I cannot help offering one inference from it, as it ſerves to account for Mr. Benwell's preſent rancour againſt me.

Mr. Benwell ſeems to have been irritated firſt of all at my declining attendance in the character of a mere aſſiſtant, after I had been principally concerned; and theſe firſt emotions of his reſentment were probably cheriſhed, and carefully fomented by the

the inſinuations and miſrepreſentations of my enemies, by whom he was ſurrounded.—From catching cold by a premature removal; from a full habit, or improper treatment, perhaps from mixture of all three, he ſickened at a time when Mr. Bromfeild was prevented by illneſs from attending him in perſon. The ſtump of courſe was affected by this feveriſh indiſpoſition. What medicines were adminiſtred, and in what manner he was managed, it is not my province to record. But Mr. Bromfeild continued to direct with the attendant phyſician; the diſorder degenerated into an ill-formed intermittent, and the ſtump aſſumed a very untoward appearance. In a word, the ſymptoms grew every day more and more unfavourable for a number of days; during which time no additional help was called in. At length the patient's life being ſuppoſed in the moſt imminent danger, the two ſerjeant ſurgeons were ſent for down; and in conſequence of their prudent directions, the fever was removed, a good digeſtion obtained, and finally a perfect cure compleated.

When Mr. Benwell ſaw himſelf for ſome time diſappointed in his expectations of a ſpeedy cure, notwithſtanding the favourable circumſtances in the firſt fortnight or three weeks, and felt his conſtitution take an unkind turn, while he was fretted with pain,

and

and rendered peeviſh by diſtemper, it is natural to ſuppoſe he would complain, and even hint a ſuſpicion of his having been treated amiſs. The emiſſaries of Mr. Bromfeild, who lived in his houſe, and were conſtantly at his ear, did not fail to ſeize this opportunity of telling him in plain terms, that the bad ſymptoms aroſe from no other ſource, than the errors and defaults in the original operation; errors and defaults which would not have happened had the limb been taken off by Mr. Bromfeild. This calumny artfully diſpoſed thro' different channels, repeatedly infuſed at ſuch a juncture into a mind ſore with anguiſh, and ruffled with prepoſſeſſion, could hardly fail of producing a deep fund of hatred and reſentment, which are now become habitual, and appear accordingly with all the rancour of inveteracy, and extravagance of credulity.

It may ſeem unneceſſary to take notice of what Mr. Benwell ſays, that from hearing the narrative read, his whole family declare *Every circumſtance he related in it is fact, and that they are ready to give* their oaths to the truth, if required. If their evidence relates to what paſſed below ſtairs, 'tis very immaterial; if meant generally, 'tis certain they were neither preſent at, or privy to any particular converſation which paſſed between Mr. Bromfeild and me; nor could they poſſibly be judges of moſt of the other

circumſtances related in Mr. Bromfeild's narrative.

If in the courſe of my defence ſome harſh expreſſion againſt Mr. Bromfeild may have eſcaped me, I beg, Gentlemen, you will remember, there is ſome provocation in being ſtigmatized hy him as a libeller, defamer, and lyar; as cruel, inhuman, ungrateful, mean, and contemptible. In regard to the tranſaction itſelf, if it may be thought, in the firſt inſtance, that I acted rather too warmly, I hope that the unexpected provocation will at the ſame time be conſidered—That Mr. Bromfeild had prepared himſelf to operate by a colluſive management on the patient, from whom I had juſt parted, without receiving the leaſt intimation, or conceiving the leaſt probability of ſuch a deſign—— that Mr. Bromfeild aſſerted the rectitude of his proceedings on the moſt idle pretence: when theſe are candidly conſidered, I apprehend they will be admitted as an excuſe for my conduct at that period; and that the few minutes delay of the operation, in conſequence of the diſpute enſuing, will appear but a very bad reaſon for all the ill treatment I have ſince received.

I muſt now aſk pardon, Gentlemen, for the trouble I have given you in the preceding account: an account which I ſhould never have offered to the public, had I not

who

been obliged to it by Mr. Bromfeild's narrative: nor was it neceſſary, perhaps, to have made it ſo circumſtantial, but for the juſtification of my character in my neighbourhood. I ſhall only add, if I have in any degree failed to give you the ſatisfaction intended; or if Mr. Bromfeild has any thing more to offer in his defence; to prevent the reflections which theſe ſort of literary altercations generally bring on the profeſſion, I am ready to ſubmit my conduct to the examination of the court of aſſiſtants, who I believe have a right to take cognizance of theſe diſputes; and I will moſt readily abide by the reſult of their determination.

I am, GENTLEMEN,

With the greateſt reſpect,

Your moſt obedient ſervant,

Windſor, *Nov.* 24, 1759.

GEO. AYLETT.

POSTSCRIPT.

AFTER having, in the foregoing Appeal, ſo clearly demonſtrated the abſurdity and malice of the charge brought againſt me, with reſpect to my conduct in the caſe of Mr. Benwell; I ſhould not have reſumed the ſubject at this juncture, were I not compelled to appear again in my own juſtification, by the ſubſequent virulence of my enemies; who, with a mixture of rancour and effrontery peculiar to themſelves, have not ſcrupled to inſinuate that I had falſified and miſrepreſented the evidence of Mr. Poppleton, on which my vindication is partly founded: as this is too tender a point to be paſſed over unnoticed, I find it incumbent on me to trouble the public with a ſhort detail of the following circumſtances; which will, I doubt not, at the ſame time, expoſe ſuch malicious inſinuations, and confirm my own veracity. The teſtimony of Mr. Poppleton, to which I referred in my narrative, was the reſult of two different converſations with that gentleman. I waited upon him on purpoſe: at our ſecond meeting I aſſured him

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that he ſhould ſee what related to him before it was printed off; I preſented it accordingly: he examined and reviſed it carefully; and declared the truth of the facts, before they were offered to the public. On the day after publication, he was, by my requeſt, viſited by the Rev. Mr. Willis of Fulmere, by whom he ſent me a meſſage in the following words; which that gentleman has given me leave to publiſh, and is ready to confirm the truth of, whenever called upon: "He deſired his compliments to me, and begged Mr. Willis to tell me, that what he ſaid at Windſor coffee-houſe was, that Mr. Benwell did not *in words* agree to his propoſal (that the point of operating ſhould be ſettled by Mr. Bromfeild and me); but as Mr. Benwell *ſaid nothing againſt it, after I had left the room,* he thought he had *tacitly conſented to it, otherwiſe he ſhould not have ſuffered me to have done any thing*; that he, therefore, came down from Mr. Benwell, and made uſe of the words in my narrative, *viz.* (to know if we had ſettled the point of operating) for the ſake of his friend Mr. Benwell, and myſelf who he thought had not been well uſed: ſo that, in his opinion, neither Mr. Benwell nor myſelf had been guilty of falſity; *he,* in declaring he did not ſend him; or *I,* in affirming that he deli-

delivered ſuch a meſſage. He added, that he did not think me at all to blame, as he himſelf ſhould have acted as I did, in conſequence of ſuch a meſſage." For, indeed, how was it poſſible for me to know that this was not Mr. Benwell's own, as it was delivered to me by his friend, who, but a few minutes before, had made the propoſal to him in my preſence; and was certainly his final determination?

Though this declaration alone will, in the opinion of all honeſt men, acquit me in point of veracity, and fully juſtify my conduct at that time, I ſhall beg leave to make a few obſervations, which will as inconteſtibly prove the folly, falſehood, and iniquity of my adverſaries. Mr. Benwell, in his letter, artfully inſinuates *that I had taken my leave of him.* Nevertheleſs, in conſequence of the above meſſage, which he chuſes to forget intirely, as well as the propoſal, I immediately returned to his apartment, with my aſſiſtant Mr. Penford; and appeared before him for a conſiderable time, in ſuch a remarkable dreſs, that he could not poſſibly overlook my perſon, or miſtake my buſineſs; I mean the buſineſs of the operation, for which I was particularly habited. We even converſed with him at this period, aſſiſted in removing him from the bed to the place where the operation was performed; and, finally,

I myſelf directed the cap to be drawn over his eyes, the moment before I began to operate. He will not deny, that all this time his ſenſes were perfectly clear; and that I acted before a number of his own friends; ſo that if he had hinted the leaſt doubt or diſapprobation of my qualifications or conduct, an immediate ſtop might have been put to my proceedings.

With what face then could he affirm, that he imagined *I had taken my leave; and that he believes he ſhould have ſunk under the operation, had he thought I had a knife employed on him?* Aſſertions both ſtrongly implied, and affirmed in his letter; and ſince repeated by him in public before numbers, in violation of truth, decency, and common ſenſe: indeed, the abſurdity of the declaration will appear at firſt ſight, if we compare it with another, which he made but a few hours before, at my firſt coming to him, importing *that his ſole confidence was in me*; with other warm expreſſions of his great dependance on my abilities. I ſhall ſuppoſe then, that there had been a neceſſity for performing the operation *immediately*, and I had taken up the inſtrument for that purpoſe: I leave it to his own conſcience to determine, whether he ſhould have been apprehenſive of thoſe diſmal conſequences which he afterwards pretended to dread. If theſe are apprehenſions ſince trumped up,

up, and inſidiouſly circulated, with a view to injure my character, I deſpiſe the pitiful attempt, laugh at his impotent malice, and leave him to thoſe compunctions, which will unavoidably reſult from ſuch baſe and mean proceedings. Yet his conſcience is not the only evidence to which I can appeal: he has even bore witneſs againſt himſelf. After having firſt implyed in print, and afterwards on divers occaſions affirmed, that he did not know I was in the room, he has, in diametrical oppoſition to this aſſertion, which indeed was falſe, at laſt openly acknowledged that he ſaw me in the apartment. This is a circumſtance that needs no comment. The reader will, without my direction, immediately put a proper eſtimation upon his character in point of candour and veracity; and Mr. Benwell himſelf, I hope, will once more *bluſh at this hardineſs of his own, in impoſing upon the public the greateſt falſity.*

By this recantation he has not only betrayed his own malice, but given the lie to his own *family ſurgeon*, who had, as a ſtaunch auxiliary in his patient's quarrel, confirmed Mr. Benwell's firſt aſſertion, that *he could not know I* was preſent at the operation; and boldly averred in public, as a reaſon, that he himſelf drew the cap over his eyes, before I entered the apartment, that he might not ſee the inſtruments; With what regard to truth this aſſer-

aſſertion was made, the company then preſent, and Mr. Benwell himſelf, muſt determine. Certain it is, that either he or his patient muſt have moſt ſcandalouſly falſified, as their accounts are palpably contradictory of each other. Indeed ſome few of Mr. Benwell's adherents ſeem to be more commendable for their attachment, than for their integrity, if it be true, as he has declared in his letter, that *his family*, which conſiſts of ſhopmen and other ſervants, *are ready to give their oaths to the truth of every circumſtance related in Mr.* Bromfeild's *narrative*. This certainly is a bold ſtroke, of a piece with the above ſtrange aſſertions, and undoubtedly intended as a *Coup de grace:* but whatever Mr. Benwell may think of ſuch a declaration, I can ſcarce believe that theſe people have ſo little regard to their own characters, as to expoſe them ſo abſurdly in favour of their maſter's raſh aſſertion; as they well know, that great part of that narrative conſiſts of circumſtances, which they could not poſſibly have the leaſt perſonal knowledge of, or indeed be competent judges of, if they had. Such is the weakneſs of a man, who has been made a tool of, to ſerve the purpoſes of others, by ſubſcribing his name to whatever they dictated. In a word, his conduct with regard to me, ſince the commencement of this diſpute, has been a ſeries of ſuch malice, inconſiſtency, and contradiction,

that

that the reader will be in doubt to determine whether he is more to be pitied for his folly, or abhorred for his malevolence.

I have only to repeat, that as it will always give me the greateſt pleaſure and ſatisfaction to ſubmit my conduct to the deciſion of proper judges; ſo I take this opportunity of calling upon Mr. Bromfeild, to refer the points in diſpute to the *court of aſſiſtants*; which I find, upon inquiry, cannot take cognizance of this affair, without our joint concurrence and requeſt. If he then is conſcious of the rectitude of his own proceedings, he cannot ſurely decline the ſentence of ſo equitable a tribunal; and as the friends of Mr. Benwell profeſs ſuch a regard for the diſcovery of truth, they ought to join in the application. In the mean time, if they have not laid aſide all pretenſions to candour and common juſtice, they will ſuſpend all abuſive cenſure and ſlanderous inſinuations, until by theſe means which I have propoſed, the truth ſhall be aſcertained, and an unerring judgment can be formed on this occaſion, touching the conduct of

GEORGE AYLETT.

Windſor, Feb. 29,
1760.

FINIS.